CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.718
14 September 1995

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTEENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 14 September 1995, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Benjelloun-Touimi (Morocco)

GE.95-63719 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 718th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all, on my own behalf and on behalf of the Conference, I would like to welcome among us the new representative of France to the Conference, Ambassador Joëlle Bourgois, who will be our first speaker today. I would like to assure her of our full support and our entire cooperation in the performance of her new responsibilities.

Besides the representative of France, I have on the list of speakers for today the representatives of Brazil, Japan and Belarus, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban and the representatives of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Algeria, Argentina, the United States of America, Canada, Slovakia, Romania, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Norway, South Africa and the Republic of Korea. I invite the representative of France, Ambassador Bourgois, to take the floor.

Mrs. BOURGOIS (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the first time before the Conference in my capacity as the new Permanent Representative of France to the Conference on Disarmament, I am very happy that this should take place while you are in the Chair. You represent a country with which France maintains long-standing and very close relations of friendship and cooperation. Therefore, I have very special pleasure in congratulating you on taking up your post. You can be assured of the full cooperation of my delegation. I know how much talent and energy you plan to devote to moving our work forward, at a particularly important time for the Conference. You can rest assured of France's fullest support.

On 5 September, my country carried out the first nuclear test in its final series, in accordance with its announcement on 13 June. An official communiqué stated that this test was carried out at the Mururoa site, that it was designed to refine simulation techniques and that it had a yield of less than 20 kilotons. In this connection, I wish to emphasize the following points.

France's resumption of this series of tests must be viewed for what it is. This is the last series. It is limited in number and it will be completed before May 1996, as the President of the Republic stated on 5 September. Above all, it falls within the context of a final and complete halt to nuclear testing next year. France has made a commitment to sign the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty in the autumn of 1996. It has already taken major initiatives to move the negotiations forward. It will continue to act to ensure that the treaty is concluded in 1996, so as to honour the commitment to this effect entered into by the international community during the NPT extension Conference. Next year, when this objective has been attained, this will be a considerable achievement, a major step forward in the spheres of disarmament and non-proliferation, in so far as it is indeed a universal treaty.

It is in this context that one must view the decision taken by France to sign the CTBT in the autumn of 1996 and to resume a final limited series of

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tests. The two facets of this decision do not have the same scope: the resumption is limited and temporary; the treaty will be comprehensive and definitive. But these two facets are inseparable: our commitment to sign the CTBT could not have been taken without our decision concerning the resumption of testing. Because this final round is indispensable to guarantee the credibility of our deterrent force in its present state, to verify the security and reliability of our weapons and to acquire the data that are indispensable for the development of simulation instruments, so that we will be able to dispense with tests once and for all from 1996 onwards. It is thanks to this decision that France has been able to come out in favour of both a treaty of unlimited duration and a ban on all nuclear explosions whatever their level may be. Indeed, in adopting the toughest position on the scope of the treaty, France has greatly contributed to the reactivation of the negotiations, as many countries have emphasized here. Therefore this fundamental aspect should not be lost sight of: without a brief resumption of its tests, France would not have been able to sign a comprehensive test-ban treaty next year; without the signatures of the nuclear-weapon States, that treaty would have no meaning.

Lastly, with regard to the conditions in which this final round of tests is taking place, I think it would be fair to recognize the concern for transparency - unprecedented on the part of a nuclear Power - that France has shown from the outset.

Transparency with regard to its intentions: from the very beginning of the negotiations on the CTB, France clearly stated that it reserved the option to resume testing, and that for this reason it denied the alleged incompatibility between the negotiations and the carrying out of a final round of testing. This is also the reason why the NPT extension Conference, in its declaration on principles and objectives for disarmament and non-proliferation, spoke of "restraint" and not a "ban" on testing before the entry into force of the CTBT. France was therefore clear about its intentions, and it is abiding strictly by its commitments.

Transparency with regard to the number and purpose of the tests: this information was made public as early as 13 June, that is to say, more than two months ahead of time, and this is unprecedented.

Lastly, transparency with regard to the environment: no nuclear-weapon State has to date been as open as France has been in allowing international experts to verify that these tests are harmless for the environment. And none has invited scientists to come and see for themselves on the spot, as France has done.

It is France's wish that what is truly at stake in the negotiations should be kept in perspective. In this connection, it appeals once again to the members the Conference to do their utmost to attain the objective entrusted to us by the international community, namely, the conclusion in 1996 of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, a treaty which will put an end to nuclear tests next year once and for all.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of France for her statement and for the very friendly and particularly warm words she addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Lafer.

Mr. LAFER (Brazil): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to congratulate you for your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to express my delegation's satisfaction, as well as my own, to have an illustrious representative of the Kingdom of Morocco conduct our work. Your well-known diplomatic skills, of which frankness and transparency are marked traits, ensure this Conference is in good hands. Be assured of my delegation's full cooperation in the discharge of your responsibilities now and in the months to come.

I also pay tribute to two of your predecessors: Ambassador Shirchinjavyn Yumjav of Mongolia, who directed the Conference's proceedings in his usual able and amiable manner; and Ambassador Antonio de Icaza, who during his incumbency sought tirelessly and tenaciously to get the Conference moving on all the substantive issues before it. In pursuing this task, Mr. de Icaza displayed the same acumen and outstanding diplomatic qualities I personally came to know during the time he was the Mexican Ambassador to Brazil. I also welcome in our midst Ambassador Joëlle Bourgois of France.

As this is my first statement of a more global nature to the Conference on Disarmament, allow me to share with you all some preliminary reflections on the theme of disarmament before addressing the more pressing issues in our agenda. At this juncture, when the 1995 CD session is close to its conclusion, it seems a good opportunity to take stock of what we have accomplished and what we have been unable to accomplish against the background of some relevant trends in international relations.

Brazil emerged for multilateral diplomacy at the Second Hague Peace Conference, in 1907. The nature of our participation in that event was coherent with our status as an intermediate country, which intended to play a constructive role in the elaboration of the norms which should govern the great questions included in the international agenda of the time. Since then, Brazil has always acted in the international sphere on the basis of the importance of consistent argument as well as on our conviction in the rule of law. This diplomatic tradition continues to inspire our insertion in the world today. It is on its behalf that I will make these considerations.

This year we commemorate the bicentennial of Immanuel Kant's Project for a Perpetual Peace, published in 1795. In the first preliminary article of his project, Kant proposes that "no treaty of peace shall be held to be such, which is made with the secret reservation of the material for a future war." We can interpret this idea as relating to the principles of transparency, confidence-building and verification, so essential in the theory and practice of disarmament nowadays. As the philosopher Jaspers once observed, "lies are the beginning of war and of every policy inspired in war. That is why truthfulness is the powerful weapon of peace".

(Mr. Lafer, Brazil)

At the end of the treatise I mentioned, Kant advanced a related principle of public law: "All maxims which require publicity in order not to miss their purpose agree with right, law and politics." And the German thinker added that if maxims of international law agree with this precondition, "they must be in accord with the general purpose of the public, namely happiness".

Our forum, by making possible open and transparent negotiations among States on disarmament agreements, which themselves include important clauses relating to verification, fulfils the role envisaged by Kant in his famous work. We should devote our best efforts to preserving and enhancing such an important international body.

Philosophers may indicate measures we ought to adopt in trying to build a better world for the future, but diplomats have to work and make progress in the world as it is. The lofty goals of peace and disarmament have to be pursued in a specific historical context. Ours is the one resulting from the end of the cold war, and diplomats, scholars and the media have not yet finished assessing the opportunities and risks it has engendered.

Raymond Aron coined the famous phrase "paix impossible, guerre improbable", to describe the nuclear stalemate that left its indelible imprint in those years. We could say today that at the global level peace has actually become possible and war even more improbable, if not outright impossible. On the other hand, in certain regional scenarios peace has become difficult and war not only probable, but a sad routine. Some observers have noted that the strait-jacket of bipolarity seemed to give some kind of order to the diversity of the world. The newly acquired freedom enjoyed by the actors in the international system has also freed forces of disintegration that have clouded the hopeful climate pervasive in the first moments of the post-cold-war era.

Disarmament or arms control, as it was called, not innocently, in the jargon of the super-Power relationship, was a main element of the structure of a bipolar world. It was not only a means of managing, both in terms of risks and of costs, a dangerous rivalry with global implications, but also of signalling the state of the overall relationship.

With the end of the cold war, it was assumed in some quarters that the huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles amassed in the context of the bipolar competition were not a pressing problem confronting humankind any more.

That this assessment was not shared by the world's public opinion has become evident in recent weeks. The repulsion caused by nuclear weapons is obvious 50 years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons by its States parties was advanced as an answer to this question. The need to proceed to nuclear disarmament has to be recognized as the other and necessary part of the answer.

(Mr. Lafer, Brazil)

Horizontal proliferation has been addressed through multilateral mechanisms such as the NPT, nuclear-weapon-free zones like those established through the Tlatelolco and Rarotonga treaties, and the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Vertical proliferation and nuclear disarmament are subjects Brazil deems as equally belonging to the multilateral sphere. The Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, has a central role to play in these matters.

The issue of disarmament, and mostly of nuclear disarmament, appears to have lost priority to certain countries not only because of the welcome evolution that led to enormous changes that were the result of the end of East-West relations as they were, but also because new and unexpected security problems came to the fore. While a movement of convergence was obvious in developments like the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the spread of the values of democracy and human rights in most regions of the world, and the various schemes for economic integration and free trade, at the same time forces of fragmentation were also at work, tearing States asunder and creating conflicts with nationalistic, ethnic or religious overtones. Security because more central a concept than disarmament, and the use of force in response to threats to international peace and security was a central aspect of the conception of security that seemed to prevail.

The fact that international security was again thought of as better assured through the show of force has drawn apart in a very artificial way the concepts of security and of disarmament, when humankind as a whole would benefit from having the maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources, as envisaged in the United Nations Charter.

The relative neglect of disarmament has also been detrimental to the relevance of this body. In our working agenda today we have only one negotiation going, which, although important, nevertheless cannot be considered a real measure of disarmament, as was the chemical weapons Convention, but rather a preliminary measure that helps prevent horizontal and vertical proliferation. When we complete our treaty next year we will have contributed to these aims and also to building a safer world, but we will not have reduced by a single unit the number of nuclear weapons in existence world wide.

The artificial separation between the concepts and practices of disarmament and security, and the pre-eminence conceded in the latter, does not take into account the fact that the regional scenarios that are of concern to the international community will be much more scary if proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is not adequately controlled. In our view, the only effective check on proliferation is universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory disarmament agreements, which may be acceptable to all and thus draw strength from their intrinsic legitimacy.

Measures in the field of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction can be important elements in the maintenance of international peace and security only if they are perceived as a step towards a more comprehensive

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process of disarmament. It is difficult to convince Governments and peoples around the world to keep their commitment to give up nuclear weapons when they hear emphatic defences of the sovereign right to nuclear deterrence and the need to keep the credibility of nuclear arsenals coming from nuclear-weapon States.

Nuclear deterrence theory was based on the premise of rationality of political actors. The resurgence of conflicts based on a volatile mix of political and emotional factors have shown how fragile this general assumption may prove to be. The eventual intersection of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction with regional scenarios of instability is not a frightening perspective only in regions of the developing world.

A global approach to disarmament and non-proliferation, openly and freely negotiated in this forum, could represent, in the face of the new urgent threats to international security, the same kind of organizing logic that, without any claim to legitimacy, the bipolar structure of the world was able to represent. Parallel to the topical solutions the international community may give to the many regional conflicts now under way, the Conference on Disarmament could be the forum for a concerted endeavour to progressively prevent the risks of war and primarily to inhibit proliferation, in all its aspects, of weapons of mass destruction.

My Government is prepared to work with all States members of the Conference on Disarmament and observer countries in every aspect of this agenda for disarmament, beginning with the issue that presents the highest priority, nuclear disarmament. This would be the answer to the dangers of an eventual withering of our forum, by injecting more relevance to our debates and negotiations. The recent events have showed that international public opinion is attentive to disarmament and that when our body addresses its concerns we can count in its unfailing support.

I have addressed what I would call a forward-looking approach to the Conference on Disarmament. These ideas stand, I recognize, in sharp contrast with what we were able to achieve this year. In these final weeks of the 1995 session of the Conference, we can only lament the fact that this session most probably will go on record as having been unable to address, except for the comprehensive test-ban treaty, any of the various substantive issues in the Conference's agenda.

It is particularly vexing to find ourselves in such a situation when consensus seems to exist for treating most of these questions, one of which - the fissile material ban - in fact merited the actual establishment of an ad hoc committee last March. Consultations held this summer showed consensus could have been obtained on the establishment of other ad hoc committees, even to address the delicate question of transparency in armaments. A display of real determination towards finding an acceptable format for the CD to deal with nuclear disarmament would certainly be instrumental for breaking the deadlock we now find ourselves in.

(Mr. Lafer, Brazil)

This addresses the substantive part of my reflections on the challenges facing this body. I shall now focus briefly on the procedural aspects of our work, which bear a direct relationship to the preceding part.

I could not comment on the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament without stressing that no international body was ever most influenced from birth by the cold war that the Conference on Disarmament and its predecessor bodies. The initial division among the two military alliances corresponded to the spirit and the realities of the time. The inclusion of the non-aligned and neutral countries introduced a new element, but those were not capable of altering the logic of negotiations. Disarmament was not thought of or conceivable as an undertaking of humankind as a whole, a global theme as it later became fashionable to call them, but as a painstaking negotiation between the two military blocs, under the scrutiny and stimulus of the non-aligned and neutral countries. Even when a global subject such as nuclear non-proliferation was addressed, it was, as we know, fundamentally through a joint initiative by the leaders of the two blocs, which was then presented for multilateral approval.

It is high time that this body overcomes the heavy heritage of the past and begins to offer answers to the expectations of the international community. Many delegations around this room, if not all, share this analysis and know that change is long overdue in terms of membership, methods of work and agenda. Many among us may fear that these changes could eventually turn out to be for the worst, not for the best, that the expansion of membership, the overhauling of our working methods and modification of our agenda could mean not more but less disarmament. Even if my delegation considers these apprehensions to be understandable, and shares them to a certain extent, we hold that the time has come for the CD to try steps in new directions. In this context, there are two issues that are intimately related to the need to heed the voice of the international community and make this body more responsive to it.

One is the question of expansion. The limitation in membership itself goes against the definition of the CD as a true multilateral negotiating body. It is our conviction that the O'Sullivan report (CD/1214) still offers the best basis for any solution. This body owes it to itself and to the outside world to take the long-overdue decision on its expansion as soon as possible. We praise and express our support for the efforts of the President of the Conference in this area.

The other issue was recently raised in this chamber by Ambassador Mounir Zahran of Egypt in his address to the plenary on 24 August: the fact that non-governmental organizations find themselves excluded from the work of the CD. Such a state of affairs seems to us unjustified, given the important contributions that NGOs could make to discussions in this forum by bringing in valuable inputs and insights from various sectors of organized society. As is well known, NGO participation in other bodies, particularly those in the human rights and environmental fields, has been greatly enriching in fostering debate and exchange of information on issues under discussion. Brazil therefore shares the opinions and supports the proposal put forward by Egypt

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for the question of NGO participation to be considered by the Conference. The format and modalities of NGO contribution to our work stand to be defined, but my delegation is confident that their contribution would be relevant, as in a way they represent international public opinion and a collective awareness of the value of peace.

The spate of nuclear tests that regrettably have taken place this year gives a renewed sense of urgency to the conclusion of the CTBT negotiations. We consider that the world can wait no longer than 1996 to turn this decisive page. Nuclear testing has always done a great disservice to both disarmament and non-proliferation. It has invariably been associated with the perverse logic of development, proliferation and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. Not surprisingly, in today's post-cold-war world carrying out nuclear tests meets generalized and unequivocal reprobation not only on the part of Governments but also of broad political constituencies within countries. This helps bring home the point that not only nuclear testing but nuclear weapons themselves and the political and doctrinal clutter which for so many years were used to justify their development and stockpiling now seem, if I may borrow a word from the French language, passé.

From the beginning of this year, the CD was able to dedicate virtually all its time and resources to the comprehensive test-ban treaty negotiations. But as with all matters of a political nature, progress on the CTBT negotiations really depends on whether or not there is a will to advance and to conclude a truly comprehensive treaty, especially on the part of those States with a testing capacity. In this regard, we have been encouraged by the positive substantive developments that have occurred in this third part of the 1995 session, particularly on scope, funding and the architecture of the international monitoring system (IMS).

Movement on such issues allows us to set our sights on what could be the best target date for CTBT signature next year. Signing the treaty as one of the final acts of the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly is, in our view, the goal to be pursued. Not only would such an occasion highlight the historic significance of the CTBT, it would also give us a more precise time-frame within which to plan for the resolution of those issues still outstanding and to engage in the final stage of substantive negotiations. Failure to reach agreement on holding formal inter-sessional meetings in the remainder of this year should not weaken the resolve to view the northern hemisphere fall of 1996 as our target date for signature.

This objective would become all the more feasible if recent significant advances with regard to certain key questions could lead to wider convergence when negotiations resume. First and foremost among these is of course the scope of the treaty. Last March, my delegation stated on record that in our view the Australian proposal contained in working paper 222 offered the best way forward. We note the growing support this text is enjoying.

It has always been Brazil's position that the CTB treaty must be comprehensive and prohibit all nuclear tests in all environments for all time. Commitments recently made to a truly comprehensive nuclear test ban that

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includes low-yield explosions have given fresh impetus to the negotiations. We expect all nuclear-weapon States which have not yet done so to make explicit pledges in favour of a true zero-yield comprehensive test ban with no loopholes.

Another area where recent decisions and new proposals could stimulate further rapid progress is treaty verification. The international monitoring system begins to take actual shape with the agreement on 50 seismic stations to conform the primary seismic network, one of which is the University of Brasilia's Seismological Observatory station, located in the western central region of Brazil. With respect to the use of the four envisaged IMS technologies, Brazil recently submitted its views in the form of answers (CD/NTB/WP.263) to the questions formulated by the Chairman of the Group of Experts in document CD/NTB/WP.225.

With regard to funding of the IMS, the acceptance by the United States of sharing costs on the basis of the adjusted United Nations scale of assessments is a step in the right direction, even though the full implications of the proposal to offset costs already incurred are still to be worked out. One question to be addressed among several others is just how much time and resources of the Technical Secretariat would need to be employed for regularly figuring out credit values for a wide range of IMS activities and for setting up and administering a special budget system to accommodate contributions in kind. These and other concerns which have already surfaced need to be discussed further, but already within the context of a generally agreed principle of cost-sharing for all IMS activities.

Another major area in which we see opportunities for progress close at hand is the Organization. The main issues still to be resolved are the nature and extent of the CTBT Organization's relationship with the International Atomic Energy Agency; International Data Centre (IDC) product analysis; and composition of the Executive Council. As stated by the Brazilian delegation last March, our preference is for a small, treaty-specific organization co-located with IAEA in Vienna which would make as much use as possible of IAEA installed capacity and available expertise. There seems to be a growing body of opinion in favour off concepts such as these. Responses by both the Austrian Government and IAEA to the two questionnaires recently elaborated by Working Group 2 will no doubt help delegations to make the necessary political decisions in defining the seat of the Organization as well as the nature and form of the IAEA-CTBTO relationship. In purely financial terms, the benefits from establishing an association with IAEA speak for themselves: in the administrative field alone, they might result in global savings in excess of US$ 10 million annually, as indicated in paragraphs 14 to 21 of document CD/NTB/WP.196.

With regard to the IDC product, we consider it indispensable that the Technical Secretariat or the IDC be in a position to analyse IMS-monitored data for event identification so as to permit States parties to properly consider events indicating possible non-compliance with the treaty. We look forward to examining criteria for event identification to be presented by the recently appointed Friend of the Chair on IDC.

(Mr. Lafer, Brazil)

Finally, the general trend of negotiations seems to show that definitive solutions on matters such as the composition of the Executive Council, on-site inspections, use of national technical means and provisions for entry into force of the treaty may continue to elude us until the actual end-game phase. It is up to us to use the coming months to build on whatever common ground there is on these issues, so as to foster convergence.

Brazil is seriously engaged in the negotiation of the CTBT. We hope this forum will be able to present the fruit of its work to the international community as soon as possible. But let us not be content with just this step, albeit significant. The Conference on Disarmament has a mandate to negotiate disarmament agreements, not a mandate to indefinitely negotiate mandates. I sincerely hope the 1996 session will show we are hearing the voice of the real world outside this room.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement and for the kind and encouraging words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Japan, Ambassador Kurokochi.

Mrs. KUROKOCHI (Japan): First of all, I would like to extend my heartfelt welcome to our new colleague, Ambassador Joëlle Bourgois of France. It is my great pleasure to work with her and I am confident that she will make an outstanding contribution to the important work of this Conference, as her predecessor did.

Today I have asked for the floor to inform the Conference of the statement made on 6 September 1995 by the Chief Cabinet Secretary, the official spokesman of the Government of Japan, concerning the nuclear test conducted by France. I would like to read his statement to the Conference, as follows.

> "It is extremely regrettable that the French Republic has resumed nuclear testing, despite the decision made on the utmost restraint on nuclear testing at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, at a time when Japan and the international community are renewing their desire for peace and nuclear disarmament on the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II and the atomic bombing.
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> "Japan has always regarded the nuclear test ban as one of the highest priorities in the field of nuclear disarmament, and it is very seriously concerned that France has conducted nuclear testing today, despite Japan's repeated requests for the reversal of its decision to resume nuclear testing. Japan strongly urges France not to conduct any more nuclear testing in future. It is also very important that all the nuclear-weapon States refrain from conducting nuclear tests. Japan, while strongly urging all the nuclear-weapon States and other countries concerned to make efforts at the Conference on Disarmament to complete the negotiation on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty no later than 1996, intends also to continue making efforts on its part."

(Mrs. Kurokochi, Japan)

That concludes the statement. I would like to reiterate on this occasion that Japan opposes any nuclear testing by any State.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to touch upon another subject briefly. I am pleased to announce that the Government of Japan will complete the ratification procedure in a few days concerning the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. It is Japan's strong hope that, with the participation of as many States as possible, the Convention will enter into force at the earliest date possible. We urge every State which has not yet done so to join the Convention.

Mr. AGURTSOU (Belarus) (translated from Russian): First of all, Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on taking office as President of the Conference on Disarmament. I am convinced that your leadership of this forum during the concluding part of the 1995 session will live up to the hopes of delegations for the Conference to yield practical and tangible results. The work of the Conference, which made it possible to achieve the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in New York, has demonstrated that its potential is quite considerable. We hope that the next priority objectives - the development and adoption of a CTBT and the completion of the cut-off process - will also be successfully attained in the near future.

While attaching great importance to nuclear disarmament and nuclear security issues, we are deeply convinced that the Conference on Disarmament is called upon to carry out its mandate fully in the field of conventional weapons as well. In connection with the conference which is just starting in Vienna on the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects, we would like to state the following.

The President of the Republic of Belarus, Aleksander Lukashenko, consistently pursuing the principles of national policy in the field of disarmament, and also following the spirit of United Nations initiatives in the field of mine clearance in the desire to limit the spread of the most dangerous types of conventional weapons having indiscriminate effects, has issued decree No. 355 of 22 August 1995 introducing a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land-mines applicable in the Republic of Belarus from 1 September 1995 until the end of 1997.

In taking this decision, the Republic of Belarus had in mind that not only participants in military actions but also to a considerable extent the civilian population fall victim to this type of weapon, a fact which underlines the inhumane nature of anti-personnel mines. In view of its scale at the present time, the problem of mine clearance is regarded by the Republic of Belarus as a priority issue in international relations.

A press release from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus on the subject has been distributed as an official document of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Belarus for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, Ambassador Dembinski, who will present the report of the Committee on the results of its work during this session.

Mr. DEMBINSKI (Poland) (translated from French): Before addressing the subject of my statement, allow me to welcome here the presence among us of the new representative of France, Ambassador Joëlle Bourgois. Because of the ties of friendship that bind my country and hers, I would like to assure her that, for my part, I will do ny best to ensure that the excellent relations between our two delegations develop in the months and years to come.

(continued in English)

It is an honour for me to introduce the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, which is contained in document CD/1346. This report represents a very significant effort on the part of many delegations, and I believe we should be proud of the results of this work, particularly in the areas of the international monitoring system, the implementing Organization, and even scope. There has been remarkable progress in particular on the section of the text dealing with seismic monitoring, with the inclusion of a list of stations. I certainly hope that similar progress will be made during the inter-sessional period in December on the auxiliary stations as well as on the other monitoring technologies. This report also registers substantial achievements in the rolling text on the implementing Organization, which we certainly welcome.

Nevertheless, while I express a certain amount of satisfaction on these points, I believe many of us share a sense of disappointment at the lack of consensus on some basic issues involved in the negotiation of this treaty. I have stated in my national capacity in the plenary, and I reiterate here, that a breakthrough must come soon on the most fundamental obligations or scope of the treaty. After presiding last year over the Working Group on Legal and Institutional Issues and this year over the Committee itself, it is frustrating not to discern convergence on this issue. While we are certainly gratified about the recent announcements by France, the United Kingdom and the United States in this regard, the Committee as a whole still needs to come to grips with the substantive differences to reach consensus language on this article.

The negotiations on this treaty must not be put on hold; nor should they continue indefinitely. The international community has crusaded for these negotiations for decades. Let us seize the opportunity and strive to complete it within the widely stated goal, "as soon as possible and no later than 1996", as states the report, among other documents. Unless the pace of the negotiations accelerates dramatically we will be hard pressed to meet that goal. There are many outstanding issues and details to be resolved, inter alia, on-site inspections and the notification time lines to precede

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them, the so-called "red light" or "green light" decision, the role of the international data centre and, last but not least, the issue of funding, the crucial question of entry into force, just to name a few.

I need not remind delegations that there are still as many pairs of brackets in the rolling text as in the rolling text of a year ago. While this fact should not necessarily stand as a litmus test to indicate the measure of achievement or otherwise, it is certainly not a cause for celebration. That fact shows, however, how much time and effort is still needed to achieve real progress in drafting treaty language. In this connection I cannot but express my deep disappointment that despite my sustained efforts it proved impossible for the Ad Hoc Committee to reach agreement on an intensive inter-sessional negotiating effort till the end of this year. I therefore urge delegations to at least use that inter-sessional break to obtain fresh instructions on the rolling text which will allow us to promptly reach consensus on both major political issues and the technical details of the future treaty and its implementing Organization.

In its report the Committee on a nuclear-test-ban treaty recommends to the Conference on Disarmament that the rolling text as well as documents listed in the report and other relevant documents be used for further negotiations and drafting of the treaty. It is further recommended that expert work on the international monitoring system proceed during the period 4 to 15 December 1995 and that the Ad Hoc Committee's work continue during the period 8 to 19 January 1996. Finally, the Committee recommends that it be re-established at the outset of the 1996 session of the Conference with its present mandate, with a view, as I stated earlier, to completing the negotiations as soon as possible and no later than 1996.

This report, CD/1346, was adopted by the Committee on 6 September 1995. As the Committee has continued its work since then, subsequent changes to the report will be reflected in an addendum, CD/1346/Add.1, to be considered and adopted in the Ad Hoc Committee on 19 September 1995, and in the plenary on 21 September. The changes appearing in the addendum will be incorporated into the annual report of the Conference on disarmament to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, which, of course, will be produced in all languages.

Allow me to conclude by offering my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the chairmen of the two working groups, Ambassador Lars Norberg of Sweden and Ambassador Jaap Ramaker of the Netherlands, as well as the many very good Friends of the Chair, convenors, experts and our indefatigable and competent Secretary, Ms. Jenifer Mackby, who have exerted all their energy and time on this endeavour.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Dembinski for introducing his Committee's report to the Conference. I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ambassador Weston.

Sir Michael WESTON (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, first let me congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference and express my admiration for the way in which you are tackling the Conference's problems. I am not sure whether to compare you to Hercules or Sisyphus or Job; perhaps you need - certainly you have - the attributes of all three. Secondly, let me welcome our new French colleague and congratulate her on her clear explanation of her Government's policy on testing and the CTBT negotiations which she gave us this morning. I look forward to working with her as closely as I worked with her predecessor. She and her delegation will have the British delegation's full understanding and support at all times.

The purpose for which I have asked for the floor is to make a short statement about the scope of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. Since the negotiations began in January 1994, the United Kingdom's policy on scope has consistently been determined by two considerations. First, we sincerely accepted the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate a complete ban on nuclear tests. At the same time, we have made clear that, in common with the other nuclear-weapon States, we will continue to bear the responsibility for maintaining the safety and reliability of our nuclear deterrent. It therefore follows that the treaty must not prevent us from fulfilling this responsibility. These two principles have informed our position in the various discussions on scope.

We are determined that the CTBT should make an effective contribution to fulfilling the objectives set out in the "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" agreed at the NPT Review and Extension Conference. The multilateral nature of the negotiations is a vital element of this, as is (in our view) the need for a common understanding among the nuclear-weapon States of the activities they may need to carry out in order to ensure the safety and reliability of their nuclear weapons under the CTBT. We have therefore worked hard with the other nuclear-weapon States towards this common understanding. I reiterated in Working Group 2 on 24 August our support for the language on scope proposed by Australia. My Government has studied carefully President Clinton's recent statement that a CTBT should mean an absolute ban on test explosions involving the release of nuclear energy and his comments on the conditions under which the United States will enter into a CTBT. Such conditions would be acceptable to the United Kingdom also. We have also noted the remarks in similar vein by the previous Ambassador of France. In the light of these statements, the two of which have given a widely welcomed boost to the negotiations of the NTB Ad Hoc Committee, I wish now, by way of further clarification (although in the light of the statement this morning of the distinguished Chairman of the NTB Ad Hoc Committee, I am not sure it is strictly necessary), to put on record my Government's position that the CTBT should not permit any nuclear-weapon test explosion involving any release of nuclear energy, no matter how small. We believe that it would contribute greatly to the progress of the negotiations if those nuclear-weapon States who have not already done so would confirm that they share this view too.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria, Ambassador Meghlaoui.

Mr. MEGHLAOUI (Algeria) (translated from French): Mr. President, it is a real pleasure for me to congratulate you on taking up the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament and to express my deep satisfaction at seeing the work of this important body guided by a representative of a country of the Maghreb at such a crucial stage in the 1995 session. At the same time as I wish you every success in your work, I would like to assure you of the full cooperation of the Algerian delegation. Allow me also to thank your predecessors for the praiseworthy efforts made during their terms of office. I would also like to welcome among us the new representative of France, Ambassador Joëlle Bourgois. I can assure her that we listened very carefully to the statement she has just made to the Conference.

On 9 February 1995, speaking before this august assembly, Mr. Mohammed Salah Dembri, Minister for Foreign Affairs, stated that "Algeria places all its trust in multilateral action in the field of disarmament" and, on that occasion, referred to the deposit of instruments of accession to the Treaty on nuclear non-proliferation on 12 January 1995. He stressed that, through that action, Algeria confirmed, for those who needed that confirmation, that it intended to use nuclear energy for strictly civilian purposes, and reiterated its faith in the non-proliferation regime. In the same statement, the Minister announced that the process of ratification of the chemical weapons Convention was under way. Today it is an honour and pleasure for me to take the floor to inform you that, on 14 August 1995, Algeria deposited the instruments of ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. In so doing Algeria has become the 33rd country to complete the ratification procedure. I would like to reaffirm my country's unshakable faith in the advent of a world free from all weapons of mass destruction, a world where peace and security would prevail. This is why we would like the Convention to enter into force as soon as possible and we appeal to all signatory States to complete their ratification procedures as soon as possible.

As we approach the end of this session of the Conference on Disarmament, the Algerian delegation is experiencing a feeling of frustration. It is true that we have made much progress in negotiating a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, although appreciable obstacles still need to be overcome. However, it is regrettable to note that we have not made progress in the other fields. It is entirely up to us to put an end to this stalemate so as to allow the Conference on Disarmament to continue its work and to justify the confidence placed in it by the international community. As all of us have seen once again in recent days, the international community is increasingly alert to non-proliferation and disarmament issues.

(Mr. Meghlaoui, Algeria)

Mr. President, while reiterating to you my best wishes for success, I would like to assure this Conference of Algeria's steadfast support for the cause of peace which unites us.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina, Mr. Hernández.

Mr. HERNANDEZ (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): First of all I wish to welcome the representative of the French Republic to this Conference on Disarmament on behalf of my country and to say that we listened most carefully to her statement made to this Conference on Disarmament. I wish to refer briefly to the French Government's detonation of a nuclear device at Mururoa atoll on 5 September and to request that the note sent by our Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Embassy of France on 6 September in Buenos Aires should be distributed as a document of this Conference on Disarmament. In this connection I wish to restate yet again my country's position against all nuclear tests whatever their origin. The Argentine Government regrets that the French Government deemed it necessary to carry out the aforementioned nuclear explosion. As a member country of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone, and in its capacity as a member State of the NPT, the Argentine Government wishes to place on record its deep disappointment and concern and to repeat that the final cessation of all nuclear tests is the best most effective means to progress towards the strengthening of the world regime of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Therefore my Government once again urges the French Government to reconsider the implications of that decision.

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States of America): Mr. President, please accept also my congratulations on your assumption of the CD presidency. You are assured of the full support of my delegation as you pursue your difficult tasks. I also join in the expressions of warm welcome extended here this morning to our new French colleague, Ambassador Bourgois.

I take the floor to read for the record a statement by the Press Secretary of the White House, issued in Washington on 5 September, with regard to the nuclear test conducted by France on that date.

> "Today, France conducted an underground nuclear test at the Mururoa test site in the South Pacific. The United States regrets this action.
>
> "All of the nuclear-weapon States agreed at the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference in New York in May 1995 to exercise 'utmost restraint' in nuclear testing pending the entry into force of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We continue to urge all of the nuclear Powers, including France, to refrain from further nuclear tests and to join in a global moratorium as we work to

(Mr. Ledogar, United States)

complete and sign a CTBT in 1996. In this regard, we take note of President Chirac's strong commitment to sign a CTBT banning all nuclear tests regardless of level no later than the fall of 1996."

That ends the White House statement. I would ask that the secretariat issue this statement as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Canada, Ambassador Moher.

Mr. MOHER (Canada): Mr. President, I wish first to congratulate you on your presidency of our Conference and to express the appreciation of my delegation for your energetic efforts to enhance the work of this body. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to our new colleague, Ambassador Joëlle Bourgois of France. I am sure that France will continue, through her participation in our work, to make a positive and wide-ranging contribution to the work of this body.

I listened carefully to the French statement made here earlier this morning and, in that context, would like to state that Canada's position on nuclear testing is well known, and has been referred to most recently in this Conference on 15 June and 17 August. Following the recent French nuclear-weapons test explosion, Canada's Foreign Minister, André Ouellet, reaffirmed that position in a statement on 5 September 1995, in which he deplored that test. While expressing his regret at the French action, Mr. Ouellet did welcome the affirmation by President Chirac that France supports a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty that will prohibit all nuclear test explosions.

Canada's policy on testing is clear; in Mr. Ouellet's words, "no testing by any nuclear-weapons State and speedy progress towards concluding a comprehensive test-ban treaty".

As a final point, and while I have the floor here this morning, I wish to take the opportunity to welcome the statement by Ambassador Weston of the United Kingdom. I urge all nuclear-weapon States - if they have not done so - to make statements to the same effect as soon as possible.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Canada for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the flor to the representative of Slovakia, Ambassador Krasnohorská.

Mrs. KRASNOHORSKA (Slovakia) (translated from French): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the first time under your distinguished presidency, allow me to congratulate you on taking up the important office of President of the Conference on Disarmament. I should like to express our appreciation for all your efforts in guiding the work of the Conference, and to wish you every success in performing your important duties. I assure you of my delegation's

(Mrs. Krasnohorská, Slovakia)

full support and cooperation. Allow me also to thank His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference, and Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, for their support for the Conference's work. I should also like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to the new Ambassadors of South Africa, Brazil, Canada, France, India and Ireland.

(continued in English)

The purpose of my address today is to share with you some deliberations on certain elements of the CD's work in 1995.

The main achievement of the disarmament agenda this year was, without doubt, the success of the NPT Review and Extension Conference. Slovakia views the NPT as an exceptionally important global mechanism for dealing with the issue of non-proliferation on nuclear weapons. The NPT has played a positive role in the modern history of mankind. We consider it the cornerstone of the whole international non-proliferation regime. Slovakia particularly welcomed the indefinite extension and strengthening of the review process of the Treaty, at the same time appreciating that the Review Conference proved to be an important landmark in the goal of achieving the universality of the non-proliferation regime.

A highly important part of the non-proliferation regime is the CTBT. Slovakia therefore expresses its deep regret about the decision of some nuclear-weapon States to further conduct nuclear tests explosions. We believe that the tests stand in clear contradiction to the principles and objectives agreed upon at the NPT Review Conference. These tests represent a step backwards in our endeavour to conclude rapidly the comprehensive test-ban treaty, thus banning all nuclear testing. The Slovak Republic hopes that all nuclear-weapon States will honour both the letter and the spirit of the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament adopted by the NPT Review and Extension Conference and exercise utmost restraint with regard to nuclear testing. Bearing this in mind, we note the commitment made by all nuclear-weapon States to sign the CTBT not later than in 1996. Nevertheless, the present situation underlines the urgent need for early completion of the treaty. The achievement of the CTBT will be the attainment of one of the most important goals of international non-proliferation efforts.

Encouraging progress has been made in the CTBT negotiations during the third part of this year's session. My delegation pays tribute to all those who have worked so hard to achieve the current results embodied in the rolling text. As Slovakia has advocated a comprehensive test ban prohibiting all nuclear test explosions without exception, we especially hail the far-sighted decision by France, the United Kingdom and the United States to accept the principle of a complete test ban without thresholds. At the same time I should like to use this opportunity to restate our strong opposition to the possibility of including in the treaty text language permitting so-called peaceful nuclear explosions.

(Mrs. Krasnohorská, Slovakia)

We encourage the Conference to ensure maximum utility of the time available and to work hard for the convergence of positions on the remaining open issues (IMS, verification) so that the treaty can be ready for signature at the fifty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly.

An important nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament issue is the ban on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. Slovakia profoundly regrets that the CD failed to meet the requests by the United Nations General Assembly and the NPT Review and Extension Conference in this regard. The failure of the CD to start the negotiations on the cut-off in spite of the fact that an ad hoc committee was established is striking. We can hardly believe that the procedural polemic could defeat the interest of some CD members in negotiating the convention in spite of the fact that it is widely considered that the convention would be one of the cornerstones of the non-proliferation regime. Slovakia looks forward to the commencement of the negotiations on a convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices at the beginning of the next year's session.

Recognizing the legitimate aspirations of the candidate countries to participate fully in the work of the CD, the United Nations General Assembly gave the CD a very precise mandate - to make it duly representative - together with a definite time-frame, the beginning of the year 1995. We profoundly regret that the CD has repeatedly not reached a consensus resulting in the expansion of the Conference in spite of United Nations General Assembly resolution 49/77 B. We believe that the Conference must be enlarged by a significant number of new members in order to ensure its representativeness which will be more appropriate to the current political situation. In principle we hold that the Conference should admit all countries which applied for membership. Unfortunately I have to express our regrets that the issue of expansion has been artificially linked to other issues to which in reality it is not related and point out the improperness of this approach. This approach cannot but lead to an impasse. The procedure enabling some countries to hide behind their respective group positions we also find rather unhappy.

I take the liberty to believe that everybody in this room is well acquainted with the specific case of Slovakia. Therefore I shall not restate the argumentation several times elaborated in detail by representatives of Slovakia - recently by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the 710th plenary meeting of the Conference on 29 June 1995. Let me simply reiterate that the Slovak Republic continues to believe in the legitimacy of its request to fill the vacant seat left by the former Czechoslovakia. We ascribe to membership of the CD paramount political importance. We also assume that after the formal recognition of Slovakia as one of the two successors of the former Czechoslovakia and the only candidate for the vacant seat, the admission of Slovakia to the CD would be a logical and just culmination of the whole issue.

At this stage I should like to express our gratitude for the support that has been explicitly and unambiguously accorded to the Slovak request by almost all member and observer States of the Conference.

(Mrs. Krasnohorská, Slovakia)

Let me simultaneously convey my feeling that in spite of the intensive consultations conducted by the Presidents of the CD in this regard, the CD as a body has failed to show sufficient good will. I would like to appeal to the CD to do so and to break the deadlock as quickly as possible. For Slovak public opinion it is incomprehensible that the international community, which is at present paying such a high price for obtaining peace in the case of another country which was dissolved, is not able to honour, through admission into the CD, the fact that Slovakia and the Czech Republic divorced peacefully, even reaching an agreement on succession in international organizations and the United Nations specialized agencies. I am sure that a sign of this kind would positively change the atmosphere reigning in the CD in regard to the expansion.

Mr. President, Slovakia highly appreciates your sincere efforts aimed at achieving progress on the issue of expansion. We believe that the CD should adopt a decision which would satisfy all interested countries and enable the Conference to submit it to the United Nations General Assembly with a clear conscience and report on real, not only formal progress. We are afraid that the Conference's lack of progress in this regard would undoubtedly influence the way the United Nations General Assembly will view the overall work of the CD in 1995.

Let me share with you some remarks of a back-bench participant of the CD negotiations. The work of the CD remains complicated by some features inherited from the time of bloc confrontation and stalemate. Sometimes the spirit of confrontation and suspicion is tangible. The imposition of preconditions, hiding behind group positions and the insufficient transparency of consultations are among the elements that unnecessarily complicate the work of the Conference. Some of the Conference procedures also deserve revision. The time wasted for lengthy discussions of the yearly agenda and report-writing could be used in a more efficient way. We especially deplore that issues so important as the cut-off negotiations and expansion are linked to others and held hostage. We believe that if the Conference wants to meet the expectations of the international community and the challenge of the day, it is high time to cope courageously with these problems.

There still remains a lot of work to be done in the non-proliferation and disarmament field. Slovakia strongly believes that the CD is willing and capable of meeting the new challenges, and wishes it every success in doing so.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Slovakia for her statement and the very kind words she addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Romania, Ambassador Neagu.

Mr. NEAGU (Romania) (translated from French): As I am taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on taking up the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament, and to welcome warmly the efforts you have been making to help our Conference move forward on the major problems in its work programme. You may count on my delegation's full support and cooperation. I would also like to associate

(Mr. Neagu, Romania)

myself with the other speakers before me who paid tribute to our new Colleague Mrs. Joëlle Bourgois, the representative of France at the Conference on Disarmament. I should like to assure Mrs. Bourgois of the wholehearted cooperation of the Romanian delegation in the spirit of the traditionally friendly relations between Romania and France.

(continued in English)

I have asked for the floor in order to inform the Conference on Disarmament that the Romanian Government has decided to support Vienna as the seat of the future CTBT Organization. Apart from a lasting tradition of friendly cooperation between Austria and Romania, this decision was premised upon our firm belief that the expertise and infrastructure of IAEA are instrumental for the good functioning of CTBTO and for the accurate implementation of the treaty, respectively. The relationship between the two bodies should be best construed on a contractual basis, by means of arrangements concerning verification activities, technical and logistical support. We share the view that such arrangements would be far more cost-effective than a formula of a CTBTO completely on its own.

Preferably, the future Organization should be separate but co-located with the IAEA, relatively small in size and personnel, requiring the minimum possible financial resources from contributing member States and enjoying, at the same time, a sound functional relationship with the Agency.

Romania noted with satisfaction the statement delivered on 16 February 1995 by the Secretary-General of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in which the offer to host in Vienna the CTBTO, its organs and - presumably - a Preparatory Commission was reaffirmed. We welcome the announcement that Austria will take all necessary measures in order to ensure the establishment of the CTBTO on the best conditions applicable to international organizations already having set up their headquarters in Vienna, which include in particular, diplomatic privileges and immunities in conformity with standing Austrian legislation and practice, as well as adequate office space free of charge.

Undoubtedly, this generous offer will be further detailed in the light of recent developments in the CTBT negotiations, taking into account the set of questions now under consideration within the CD, which indicate possible areas of interest regarding the seat of the CTBT Organization. I am convinced that the Austrian Government will respond most favourably to such questions, and in particular to those related to communications facilities. We share the view that access to international tariffs equal to the best available in the world is much needed in order that transmission of large amounts of verification data be cost-effective. Such access would be, in our view, a strong incentive for broadening the existing support for Vienna within the CD.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Romania for his statement and the very kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia, Ambassador Starr.

Mr. STARR (Australia): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you warmly on your assumption of office at this important stage of the Conference's working year. My delegation is deeply appreciative of the personal energy and vision you have brought to the tasks before us. It is high time we, collectively, gathered the determination to cut through procedural debates and to move forward the real and substantive agenda of the Conference. We thank you for your strong leadership in this endeavour and I wish to assure you of the full cooperation and support of my delegation. I would also like to welcome to Geneva and the Conference on Disarmament our new French colleague, Ambassador Bourgois. I look forward to working with you, Madam, in this forum constructively.

It is however with regret that I must turn to address the issue of nuclear tests, specifically the re-commencement of nuclear testing by France in the South Pacific which has taken place since the Conference's last plenary meeting. The Prime Minister of Australia has expressed condemnation of last week's nuclear-weapon explosion at Mururoa, and the Australian Government has protested strongly to the Government of France. As the current Chair of the South Pacific Forum, the Prime Minister has also issued a statement on behalf of the 15 countries of the Forum. That statement condemns the test and notes the particular concern of South Pacific countries over the need to address fully the environmental and health risks posed by the testing. It calls on the French Government to acknowledge the weight of opinion against nuclear testing and abandon immediately its testing programme in the South Pacific. I ask that these statements be circulated as Conference documents.

Australia is strongly opposed to nuclear testing by any country, anywhere, at any time. This position is long-standing and accords with Australia's consistent policies and efforts in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We warmly welcomed the contribution which the earlier French decision to suspend nuclear testing made to the commencement of international negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We also welcomed the recent decisions and commitments by the French Government on a true zero-testing ban, on the precise expression of this intention in the article on the scope of the treaty, and on the signing of a comprehensive test-ban treaty by the northern autumn of 1996. The clear and commendable logic of such decisions is fully in accord with the spirit of our times, a spirit decisively reflected earlier this year in New York when, with the indefinite extension of the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty, the international community entrenched nuclear non-proliferation - in all its aspects - as an enduring legal norm of international behaviour. By contrast, the re-commencement of nuclear testing, particularly at this critical stage of the finalization of the comprehensive test-ban treaty, belongs to the behaviour of a different era, to a different time, and to the logic of a world we, the international community, have deliberately and decisively put behind us.

Like the great majority of peoples and nations, we in Australia cannot accept that continued or resumed nuclear testing by any country can make easier the achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. This was self-evident to us all in New York four months ago, and is reflected in the

(Mr. Starr, Australia)

language we agreed upon there by consensus. We, and others, believe firmly that any State continuing to test bears a particularly heavy responsibility for the future health and timely conclusion of our negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Australia for his statement and the particularly kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand, Ambassador Armstrong.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (New Zealand): At the outset, I should like to welcome to the Conference on Disarmament those newly arrived representatives, including most recently Ambassador Bourgois of France, and to say that New Zealand looks forward to continuing to work together with her delegation in this body.

Following France's detonation of a nuclear device in French Polynesia on 6 September, the New Zealand Prime Minister announced the recall of New Zealand's Ambassador in Paris for consultations and made the following statement. "France is flying in the face of world opinion. Just a short time ago 18 nations of the Asia-Pacific region called for an immediate end to all nuclear testing. France has turned a blind eye to the storm of protest that its decision to resume nuclear testing has stirred up in recent weeks. The opposition to the tests has come from around the globe including significantly, from Europe itself. A majority of the French people say the policy is wrong. We live in an interdependent world. It defies explanation that the French Government sees itself as somehow standing apart."

Prime Minister Bolger noted with regret that by using its presence in the South Pacific to pursue its national defence policies, France was totally disregarding the views and interests of the States of the South Pacific. Its actions also ran counter to the worldwide movement away from nuclear weapons and complicated the chances of the international community realizing its broader goal of a truly comprehensive and internationally verifiable test-ban treaty. The Prime Minister said that New Zealand had "welcomed recent French statements that France could support a treaty that prohibits any nuclear test explosion. It is a step in the right direction. But New Zealand also wants France to close for all time the testing sites at Mururoa and Fangataufa and to sign the protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga."

The Prime Minister concluded: "New Zealand's main objective up to this point had been to persuade President Chirac to rescind his decision to resume testing. New Zealand deeply regretted his refusal to do so. New Zealand would press ahead with its appeal to the International Court of Justice for an interim injunction. France must realize that its actions have caused deep concern and anger among countries in the Asia-Pacific region and deep disquiet in the wider international community."

(Mr. Armstrong, New Zealand)

That concludes the statement. While I have the floor, may I also take the opportunity to welcome the earlier statement of the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland clarifying his country's position on the scope of the CTBT and confirming that his country supports a true zero-yield comprehensive ban?

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, my delegation warmly congratulates you on the way in which you have been conducting the work of the Conference on Disarmament in this final phase of its annual session. We are grateful to you for your efforts and dedication and we reiterate our support and friendship. Allow me also to extend a warm welcome to Ambassador Joëlle Bourgois, the representative of France, and to thank my old friend Ambassador Celso Lafer for his kind words about my term of office as President.

On 24 August I informed this Conference that my Government regarded as very regrettable the conduct of a nuclear test by the Peoples Republic of China. On that occasion my Government reiterated its appeal to the nuclear-weapon States to refrain from conducting tests of such weapons and to declare an immediate and complete moratorium so as to encourage intensified negotiations leading to a treaty that will be opened for signature before the commencement of the fifty-first United Nations General Assembly and will, as proposed by the Group of 21, provide for a complete ban on all nuclear tests by all States, in all environments and for all time, with no test permitted for any reason or with any justification, including those linked to the safety and reliability of nuclear weapons.

Today I am informing this Conference that on 5 September the Government of Mexico deplored and condemned the conduct of a nuclear test by the Government of the French Republic in the South Pacific on that day and reiterated its determination to work with the member countries of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the States parties to the Treaty of Rarotonga to urge the next United Nations General Assembly to adopt a moratorium with immediate effect on this type of testing pending the entry into force of the treaty that we are now negotiating in this Conference on Disarmament in order to ban them completely.

The Government of Mexico will also propose that if a State violates this moratorium it will be held legally responsible for the damage to population groups, security or the environment resulting from the test, as determined by an impartial international authority. As we all know, in the recent Conference for the review and extension of the non-proliferation Treaty, the nuclear-weapon States undertook to make systematic and progressive efforts to reduce these weapons, with the ultimate goal of eliminating them. The conduct of nuclear tests is not in keeping with this solemn commitment which was entered into along with the decision to extend the application of the Treaty indefinitely, nor with its purposes. Speaking before Congress on 12 September, my country's Minister for Foreign Affairs said that in a world characterized by globalization, international security is indivisible and has to be safeguarded for all nations regardless of their military might or economic position. He went on to highlight the clear link between the

(Mr. de Icaza, Mexico)

consolidation of an effective non-proliferation regime and progress towards the early abolition of weapons of mass destruction. We should remember in this respect that in adopting the decision to extend the application of the non-proliferation treaty, strengthened machinery was adopted for review and periodic evaluation of the commitments and obligations entered into by the States in the matter. On 5 September, on the occasion of the nuclear test in the South Pacific, the Government of Mexico stated that it is obvious that if in any of the periodic evaluations we reach the conclusion that the nuclear Powers are not carrying out what they agreed to, we always have at our disposal the possibility of taking drastic measures, including that of revising our position with regard to the non-proliferation Treaty, on the basis of article X of the aforesaid international instrument.

International public opinion demands that, in the present circumstances of détente, efforts should be speeded up to remove the threat that nuclear weapons represent for the community, and it is not prepared to tolerate this historic and possibly unique opportunity being wasted through acts that show an anachronistic attachment to security doctrines which, though at one time they had their own logic, are now in themselves a threat for the security of all. In this respect, on 5 September in Quito, Ecuador, the Presidents of the Rio Group, as leaders of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, the first nuclear-weapon free zone, placed on record their "profound concern at and rejection of the resumption of nuclear tests by the Peoples Republic of China and the decision of the French Government to resume testing in the Pacific, a geographical area of which the majority of the member countries of the Rio Group form part. In view of the fact that these actions affect the environment for the pursuit of the negotiations on the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty", the heads of State and Government urgently called on the Governments of States that possess this type of weapon "to suspend all nuclear testing through unilateral or agreed moratoriums, in order to speed up the negotiation of a multilateral, effectively verifiable treaty for the complete prohibition of nuclear tests."

The same views were expressed by the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States, which yesterday, 13 September adopted a declaration deploring the recent conduct by the French Government of a nuclear test, appealing to that Government to reconsider its decision to resume nuclear testing in the South Pacific and stating that the conduct of nuclear tests in the South Pacific is a potential risk for the health and safety of the peoples of the coastal States, their living resources and their environment, and ignores the precautionary principle endorsed in the Rio Declaration on environment and development and other regional agreements.

The Government of Mexico knows how complex it is to make progress in the sphere of nuclear disarmament. Nevertheless, it reiterates its firm decision to pursue this effort despite the obstacles it may encounter in order to attain such a noble objective, and will continue to urge the speediest possible conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty despite the fact that those tests being carried out now are regrettably hampering the negotiating process to which we all say we are committed.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement and the very kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa, Mr. Goosen.

Mr. GOOSEN (South Africa): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of the important office of President of the Conference on Disarmament. I am particularly pleased that you as a fellow African are presiding over the Conference. I would also like to express the appreciation of my delegation to your predecessor, Ambassador Yumjav of Mongolia, for the creditable way in which he guided the work of the Conference during his term of office.

I would also like to use this opportunity, also on behalf of my Ambassador, to warmly welcome the distinguished representatives who have recently joined us in the Conference on Disarmament. They are Ambassador Arundhati Ghose of India, Ambassador Mark Moher of Canada, Ambassador Péter Náray of Hungary and Ambassador Joëlle Bourgois of France. The association between South Africa and Ambassador Bourgois will, I am sure, be the basis for continued close relations between our two delegations. I would appreciate it if the French delegation could also convey my delegation's best wishes to Ambassador Gérard Errera in his new assignment.

I have asked for the floor in order to inform the Conference of a statement issued on 6 September 1995 by South Africa's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Alfred Nzo, in which he expressed my Government's regret at the French nuclear test explosion on Mururoa atoll. The text of my Minister's statement, which was entitled "South African Government condemns France's nuclear-weapons test", reads:

> "The South African Government objects to and deplores the nuclear test explosion which was conducted by the Government of France on the Mururoa atoll on 5 September 1995. It had been the South African Government's hope that France would heed international concern about their decision to abandon the moratorium on nuclear tests and to resume their testing programme in the South Pacific.
>
> "We are deeply concerned about the potential negative effects of underground nuclear testing on the environment. We reaffirm our solidarity with the States in the South Pacific and will continue to support their strong opposition to the resumption of the French tests in their region.
>
> "The South African Government firmly believes that the French test is in contradiction with the agreement on 'Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament', which were adopted by consensus at the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review and Extension Conference. In that agreement, which France helped negotiate, the nuclear-weapon States undertook to exercise utmost restraint with respect to nuclear testing pending the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (CTBT) in 1996. The French test is also of particular concern coming as it does during sensitive negotiations for a

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CTBT in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva. This explosion is furthermore in contrast with the announcements made in the context of the CD negotiations by several of the nuclear-weapon States regarding the acceptance of the proposal to ban any nuclear-weapon test explosion, or any other nuclear explosion, irrespective of its size.

"South African diplomats and representatives have in international forums protested against the two Chinese nuclear tests conducted so far this year, and also against the policy of the French Government to resume their nuclear testing. Work is also being done to bring a resolution on nuclear testing before the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

"We urge the Government of France, as well as the Government of China, to reconsider their nuclear testing policy, to abandon plans for further nuclear tests and to join in a global moratorium. We believe that this latest test is a further step backward in the endeavours of the international community to ban nuclear testing. In addition South Africa also wishes to call on all the other nuclear-weapon States to maintain their commitment to their moratoria and to continue to 'exercise utmost restraint'."

That concludes the statement of my Foreign Minister.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of South Africa for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Hwang.

Mr. HWANG (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation, I congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency at this year's last session of the CD. My delegation sincerely hopes that this session of the CD will be able to conclude with fruitful results under your wise guidance.

My Government has the conviction that the supreme need of today after the cold war is to build an enduring structure of lasting peace in the world. We believe that the first step towards that goal is building trust within the international community. In this sense, any nuclear test by any country at this time, we think, runs counter to the principle of bona fides in the light of the spirit expressed at the NPT Review and Extension Conference held in May this year. From this conviction, my delegation would like to make known to this forum the statement of 6 September 1995 by the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea concerning the recent French nuclear testing. The statement reads as follows:

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"The Government of the Republic of Korea is highly disappointed that France went ahead with a nuclear test, breaking its own moratorium on nuclear testing of April 1992, despite strong protests and deep concerns registered by many countries all over the world. As an Asia-Pacific country we especially regret that France conducted the test in this region.

"We urge again France to immediately halt all nuclear testing in order not to obstruct global and regional non-proliferation efforts especially at the time when the negotiations for any early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty are progressing."

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Akram.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to congratulate you on the outstanding manner in which you are conducting the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We have been deeply impressed by your commitment and determination to ensure that the CD, despite the difficulties which have plagued it throughout this year, concludes none the less its final session on a successful note. In this endeavour, you will have the full cooperation of the Pakistan delegation.

I would also like to express appreciation to your predecessor once again, Ambassador Shirchinjavyn Yumjav of Mongolia, who guided the work of the Conference with notable skill, competence and dignity. I would like to take this opportunity also to welcome our new colleague, the Ambassador of France, and to assure her of our full cooperation in the work we shall be conducting here and later this next year in the Conference.

The Conference will, in a few days, conclude its 1995 session. This year the CD's work has produced mixed results. While it was unable to resume its work on a number of important disarmament issues, we can take satisfaction in the progress achieved in the CTBT negotiations. There remain important issues on which agreement will need to be reached at an early stage when the Conference resumes its work in 1996 so that we are able to conclude the CTBT before the end of next year. I would like to present our views on these salient issues. Consensus on these issues will pave the way for the successful completion of the CTBT negotiations.

For some time the negotiations came under a deep shadow of positions seeking to create threshold exemptions in the scope of the CTBT. In my statement of 24 August 1995, we welcomed the French and United States announcements, as we do the United Kingdom statement today, supporting a truly comprehensive treaty. However, another session of the CD will end without an agreement on the most basic issue in the CTBT negotiations, namely the scope of the treaty. The importance of achieving agreement on this issue cannot be overstated. The language of the scope article must not leave any room to allow loopholes which can be exploited in contravention of the objective and

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purpose of the treaty. It must also be consistent with the long-standing objectives of a CTBT, namely, to put an end to weapons-related nuclear testing of any kind.

An important issue pertaining to Working Group 2 of the Ad Hoc Committee on NTB concerns the question of the membership of the Executive Council, on which there has been little progress. We believe that a prior understanding on the principles which will govern the membership of the Executive Council is necessary before any fruitful drafting work can be undertaken. These principles must be relevant to the context of the CTBT rather than a transposition of provisions from other agreements to ensure privileged positions for some countries. The membership of the Executive Council must be based on technical as well as political criteria.

The highlight of this session of the Conference was the progress achieved in regard to the architecture of the international monitoring system. We note with satisfaction the convergence of views on the number of primary seismic stations required for the IMS. We are confident that a consensus will soon be possible on the number of auxiliary stations for the seismic network.

This progress augurs well for agreements in regard to the other facets of the IMS (namely, radionuclide, hydroacoustic and infrasound monitoring stations). An effective and efficient IMS is essential for a sound verification system for the CTBT. This can be achieved only if there are no gaps in the coverage of the IMS both in terms of geography and detection of low-yield nuclear explosions. For this reason it may be essential for the IMS to be strengthened by the addition of satellite monitoring and electromagnetic pulse (EMP) detection.

We do not favour the use of the so-called national technical means which are not part of the recognized monitoring network, either as a supplement to the IMS or as a parallel mechanism for verification of the CTBT. We do not anticipate the use of NTMs either as a trigger for OSI or subsequently. To acknowledge the validity of NTMs in the context of CTBT verification is tantamount to undermining a priori the credibility of the IMS which is being constructed so painstakingly and which will entail considerable expense. NTMs also raise a host of legal issues, since some of the activities associated with them, both technical and non-technical, may be considered "illegal" and in violation of the sovereignty of States concerned. Furthermore, since NTMs are currently owned by only a few countries, their use on a selective basis outside the IMS framework will make the treaty discriminatory.

The question of on-site inspections and the role of OSI in the CTBT represents a sensitive issue. In any multilateral treaty OSI should be the measure of last resort in resolving compliance questions. Provisions for OSI need to be formulated with great care and deliberation and must necessarily contain proper safeguards against abuse. When inevitable, OSI must be conducted in the least intrusive manner consistent with the objective of timely and effective detection of treaty violations. The sequence of events leading to an OSI must involve the detection of an ambiguous event by the IMS, a mandatory process of consultation and clarification, which if unsuccessful

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must oblige the Executive Council to consider all the relevant information from the IMS before authorizing by a two-thirds or three-fourths majority to conduct an on-site inspection.

The so-called "green light" procedure for the Executive Council to authorize OSI constitutes an indispensable mechanism for ensuring that on-site inspections remain an exception and will only be conducted strictly in accordance with the purposes of the CTBT.

The principal reason cited by supporters of the "red light" procedure concerns the need to gather time-critical evidence by the inspection team before such evidence dissipates. It is mainly the possibility of noble gas releases in the atmosphere and to an extent after-shocks from a nuclear explosion which are considered time-critical evidence. According to the experts, however, the probability of release and detection of noble gases in a well-camouflaged test is extremely low. With low detection probability, the relative merits and demerits of launching OSI in a hasty manner need to be more carefully assessed, specially since such "exploratory" missions may have far-reaching consequences for the CTBT verification regime. The mechanisms for conducting OSI should be consistent with the principles that on-site inspections be rare, non-intrusive, effective and cost-efficient.

Hard evidence on the other hand will continue to remain at the site of an underground nuclear explosion and again, according to expert opinion, can be detected months, years and even hundreds of years after the nuclear explosion. These factors must be given due consideration in endeavours to devise a sequential and orderly OSI regime for the CTBT. Arguments based on the notion of loss of time-critical evidence cannot become the basis to support the so-called red-light approach which has abundant scope for misuse. In any case, it is our view that the process of consultations and clarification and the approval of OSI by the Executive Council would allow adequate time to collect time-critical evidence.

While we are gratified at the progress made during 1995 in the CTBT negotiations, it is a matter of disappointment that the CD was unable to address numerous other important issues on its agenda. My delegation has consistently expressed its willingness to begin work on all items simultaneously. We are especially disappointed that there is a persistent reluctance to open negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament on nuclear disarmament - an objective which has been accorded the highest priority by the international community. Pakistan hopes that the Conference on Disarmament will be able to establish early in 1996 an ad hoc committee to commence concrete negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement and for the very kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Berdennikov.

Mr. BERDENNIKOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, allow me first of all to congratulate you on taking up the responsible post of President of our Conference. We are convinced that under your active and energetic leadership we will be able to resolve the problems on which there has been no progress for so long and which have been preventing us from making satisfactory progress in our work. I am also pleased to welcome the new ambassador of France among us and to express the hope that there will be a continuation of the close and friendly relations between our delegations.

I asked for the floor in order to draw the attention of distinguished colleagues to document CD/1347, which has been circulated at the request of the Russian delegation. This document contains a statement dated 20 July 1995 by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation concerning its attitude to the resumption of nuclear testing by France and also a statement dated 6 September 1995 by a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in connection with a nuclear test carried out by France. The latter statement notes that:

> "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation expresses profound regret at the fact that, despite the serious concern which has been expressed by the entire international community, including the Russian Federation, France has nevertheless embarked on implementation of the programme of nuclear tests scheduled for the current year."
>
> "The breach of the current moratorium applied by the four nuclear Powers constitutes a serious blow to the agreements which have successfully been reached recently in the field of disarmament and the strengthening of regimes for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The resumption of testing runs counter to the spirit of the joint decisions reached at the conference in New York and directed towards the speedy cessation of all tests by all nuclear Powers. All of this, of course, cannot but further exacerbate an already complex international situation."

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. We have come to the end of the list of speakers. Would any other delegations like to take the floor at this stage? I give the floor to the representative of France, Ambassador Bourgois.

Mrs. BOURGOIS (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all allow me to thank the representatives who have extended such a warm welcome to me, and all those among them who have said that they wish to continue the existing cooperation with France. Allow me also to give an assurance to each and everyone that I will do my best to make the most positive possible contribution with them to the progress of our work. I also wish to take this opportunity to say how much we welcome the announcement made by the United Kingdom delegation with regard to the scope of the treaty, an announcement which I think is an important event in this plenary session.

(Mrs. Bourgois, France)

With regard to the remarks that have been addressed to France, I would first like to say briefly that, as far as the environmental effects of our tests are concerned, I note that some are continuing to cite damage which is not substantiated by solid proof. For our part we prefer to rely on analyses by scientific experts. Indeed, as you know, we have invited scientists to come and see for themselves on the spot, at the end of this final series, that our tests present no danger for the environment. I think that this demonstrates our confidence in the guarantees that have been offered in this regard. Finally, with regard to the argument that this round of tests jeopardizes the negotiations on the CTBT, I have already said in my opening statement that the reverse of this was true. Without this last round, France would not have been in a position to sign the treaty next year, and without the signatures of the nuclear Powers, this treaty would have no meaning. In contrast, and many of you have emphasized this, France was able to agree that the treaty should be of unlimited duration and was able to enter into a clear and definitive commitment with regard to scope, that is, the prohibition of all nuclear explosions, whatever their level. The Conference on Disarmament has been entrusted with a fundamental mission by the international community; the Conference must rise to the task that has been given to it and the time has now come to avoid debates and endeavour to redouble our efforts so that we are in a position to conclude and sign the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty in 1996.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): If there are no further speakers I would like to move on to other matters. As I announced last week, I now propose to place before the Conference for approval the recommendation contained in paragraph 14 of the progress report of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts on detection and identification of seismic events concerning the dates for the next two sessions of the Group of Experts, that is, from 27 November to 1 December 1995 and from 12 to 23 February 1996, respectively. May I take it that the Conference accepts this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): As you know, over the past few days I have stepped up my consultations, both at the bilateral level and among the group coordinators, with the aim of solving the problem of the expansion of the membership of the Conference. Following these consultations, I have sent all the coordinators, and through them all delegations, a draft decision on this subject. During the President's consultations I held yesterday afternoon, a proposal was made that consideration should be postponed until a later plenary session, to allow for consolidation of the consensus that seems to be emerging on this matter. In accordance with the practices of this Conference, and inspired by a wish to take all opinions into account and to spare no effort to find a solution to this problem, which we all consider to be a matter of importance and priority, I have acceded to this request in order to allow the consultations under way to produce the desired result.

(The President)

I would like to add the following. I have been extremely touched by the words of encouragement and the very kind words that have been addressed to me today, and earlier in private, and I would not be living up to this confidence or the responsibilities incumbent upon me as President if I did not make a few observations, if I did not sound a note of caution. I believe that there is a very clear saying that some things are better left alone, and another that one should never miss an opportunity when the time is ripe, because in multilateral negotiations, if an opportunity is missed when it arises, all our efforts may come to nothing. I would like to emphasize that we all agree that this is an extremely important question for all of us, for all the reasons we have mentioned, and that is why we have devoted many bilateral meetings and several informal meetings to this subject, and I think we all know the positions of the various parties.

We have prepared a text which I believe takes into account the positions of all. Of course, it is a text which cannot satisfy all delegations in the Conference, but it is a compromise text, and hence by definition a text which cannot fully meet all concerns. It is for that reason that I appeal for your understanding, which I think I secured in private during our informal consultations. I have really appreciated the sense of duty that we all have towards the other delegations sitting in the second row in this hall and to the international community, and that we must act without haste, and that is why I agreed with great hesitation not to ask for a decision on this text today, because there is a very clear distinction between haste and determination. I understand that certain delegations wish to look at the text again, perhaps make a few suggestions, but as I have said so often, one person's suggestions may be negative for others; so balance is in a way what the President has tried to put into this document, which will be distributed tomorrow in all the official languages in delegations' pigeon-holes. It bears the symbol CD/WP.467 and is dated 13 September 1995. Of course, this does not mean that the text cannot be amended, but I must say in all frankness that I think it would be difficult to amend it in any substantial manner if we want to retain a consensus on this issue. I repeat once again: there is a very clear distinction between haste, which I do not want - that is why I very reluctantly agreed not to discuss this today - and determination.

I come to my second proposal, which is that at a future meeting - I think fairly soon, before the end of next week - I will submit this text to the Conference for a decision. I also understand that many delegations have a great deal to say on this. I understand this - my delegation also has a lot to say - so with your consent I would like to devote a plenary session to the adoption of this text. In this way everyone will be able to make any comments he or she deems appropriate.

Mr. BERGUÑO (Chile) (translated from French): Mr. President, it is on listening to your wise words that I would like to make a preliminary statement on behalf of the Group of 23. However, before doing so I wish to extend my very friendly congratulations to you and extend a welcome to Ambassador Joëlle Bourgois of France, and, while taking note of the important statement she made, and recalling my own statements on this subject, I would

(Mr. Berguño, Chile)

ask for my Government's official condemnation of France's latest nuclear test to be circulated as a Conference document. I now switch to English to read out the declaration of the Group of 23.

(continued in English)

We understand that the proposal on expansion that you have been advocating would do the following. It would adopt the report of the Special Coordinator in document CD/1214, which provides for the expansion of the Conference's membership to include 23 additional countries. It would not give these countries the right to exercise a veto consistent with our national security interests. In this I have to say that this is a matter of considerable disappointment to our Governments, that the CD has not been able to reach a consensus on an expansion in accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/77 B. This proposal also recognizes, by recalling General Assembly resolution 49/77 B, the legitimate rights represented in the membership applications of all 35 current applicants, naturally including the 12 applicants not listed in the O'Sullivan report. It recalls also rule 2 of the CD's procedures, which provide for regular review of membership, and it states that the current decision does not prejudice the consideration of applications of other candidatures listed in the 1994 CD report. This must mean that the expansion of the CD's membership cannot end with the entry of our 23 countries but must be regularly reviewed in a dynamic way. This is only common sense - the CD, to be effective, cannot stand still in time and refuse to continue to adjust itself to the international realities of any given period.

Your proposal establishes a process which does not fulfil the terms of General Assembly resolution 49/77 B, nor the expectations of any applicant country, but rather is a step towards meeting the General Assembly's requirement that the CD expand to a membership of at least 60 countries. There surely can be no delegation in this room that believes that in adopting this decision the process of ensuring continued CD effectiveness and legitimacy over time, through subsequent balanced expansions, will stop forever.

We therefore urge any member delegation which may have any particular concerns to consider positively the terms of this decision. We also urge any delegation to reflect very carefully whether their national security interests require them to prevent the adoption of your proposal, Mr. President, and the serious consequences of such an action. The General Assembly has placed upon the CD a responsibility regarding its membership. Surely it will draw a most unfavourable conclusion regarding the CD's competence to resolve this issue itself if the CD once again fails to report any progress to the fifty-first session. We obviously expect that the outcome of your initiative, for which we thank you warmly, will be accurately reflected in the report of the CD this year.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I now turn to the informal paper distributed by the secretariat which contains the timetable of meetings for the Conference and its subsidiary bodies for the coming week. This timetable

(The President)

has been drawn up in consultation with the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. As usual it is merely indicative and can be amended if necessary. On that understanding, I suggest that we adopt it.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): Before adjourning this plenary meeting I would like to remind you that this afternoon we will be holding an informal meeting to continue to examine the technical parts of the draft annual report to the United Nations General Assembly, as contained in document CD/WP.466. I would also like to announce that this afternoon's meeting will be held in this room at 3 p.m. and that consequently the meeting of Working Group 2 of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban will take place in room VII at 3 p.m. I give the floor to the representative of Australia, Ambassador Starr.

Mr. STARR (Australia): I apologize for asking for the floor at this late stage. I wanted to refer briefly to the adoption of the report of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events, which we have just completed, and to say that my delegation would like to register the fact that, in joining with others to note the content of the report of the GSE and to endorse the recommendations contained in its paragraph 14, we are proceeding on the basis that the draft schedule of work contained in pages 6 and 7 of the report has been adjusted in accordance with assurances given by Dr. Dahlman to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban and formally conveyed by Ambassador Dembinski to the Committee. These assurances were to the effect that the complete report of the GSE on recommendations for seismic auxiliary stations will be available to the IMS Group of Experts meeting in the period 4-15 December 1995, when all the necessary technical input will be required in accordance with the decisions of the NTB Ad Hoc Committee and the Conference affecting our inter-sessional work programme.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday 21 September 1995 at 10 a.m. unless we decide, if matters proceed as I hope they will, to hold a plenary meeting before next Thursday to consider and examine the decision on the expansion of the Conference.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.